
NEWS RELEASE

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DHSS Director Jane Drummond, Statewide Emergency Medical Care Groups Testify in Support of Proposed Emergency Stroke and Heart Attack Legislation

Jefferson City, MO.-February 27, 2008. The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services informed the House Health Care Policy Committee yesterday the state has an opportunity to save lives by improving the emergency medical care system's response to strokes and some types of heart attacks.

DHSS Director Jane Drummond testified in support of HB 1790, which would provide the statutory framework for the creation of a Time Critical Diagnosis System for stroke and ST-elevation myocardial infarction (STEMI), a particularly fatal type of heart attack.

"This critical legislation gives the state the ability to create a comprehensive, statewide structure for the development of regional systems where stroke or STEMI patients in Missouri can be assured that they receive the right care in the right place in the right amount of time," said Drummond.

Missouri is one of a dozen states pursuing solutions to improve emergency stroke and heart attack care. Research shows patients transported to designated stroke centers and STEMI centers, rather than simply the nearest hospital, have higher survival rates. Missouri currently has designated trauma centers, which care for the most severely injured patients in emergencies. The House proposal would expand the emergency system by developing guidelines for designating stroke and STEMI centers.

Drummond said a Time Critical Diagnosis Task Force formed by her department in January has already begun to discuss how to build the new system. The task force includes more than 100 members of the emergency medicine community. It will review current care components and draft recommendations this summer to enable DHSS to build an ideal system of care in all corners of the state.

"Today's hearing was the fruition of five years of work to integrate emergency medicine between in- and out-of-hospital providers to improve patient care," said Dr. J. William "Bill" Jermyn, State EMS Medical Director. "This bill will provide the framework by which the Time Critical Diagnosis Task Force recommendations can be implemented."

Additional witnesses appearing in support of the bill included representatives from the Missouri Hospital Association, Missouri State Medical Association, the Missouri College of Emergency Physicians, American Heart Association, Metropolitan Ambulance Services Trust, Missouri Association of Family Physicians, Missouri Emergency Medical Service Association, and Missouri Ambulance Association.

HB 1790 is sponsored by Rep. Wayne Cooper. Co-sponsors include Reps. Bryan Stevenson, Terry Swinger, Rob Schaaf, David Sater, and Bob May.

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